

Spotters...Incredible Help to the National Weather Service!

By Tanja Fransen, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

The NWS in Glasgow is extremely fortunate to have about 1100 weather spotters in the 12 counties it provides forecast services for. These folks have come to the severe weather (Skywarn) two hour course at least once, and many of the spotters attend the courses every year. This makes my job not only a lot of fun (visiting with you all), but also a bit difficult because I don't want to show the same stuff that was shown last year, and so I am constantly trying to update the presentation with new material so as to continue the excellent interest we have.

In 2004, NWS Glasgow honored two weather spotters for their excellent help with our spotter program. **Gene Ronningen**, from Savage, was recognized for his excellent damage survey and assessment after a storm on July 11, 2004 hit the Savage area. Gene took photographs, drew up a diagram showing the buildings in the photos and the direction of the debris, and typed up an excellent assessment report. The event had widespread damage across northeastern Montana, and his help allowed the staff at the NWS to focus on many of the other areas that were damaged as well.

Terry Willard from Plentywood was recognized for his excellent spotter report of a rotating wall cloud which helped the meteorologists on duty decide to upgrade a severe thunderstorm warning to a tornado warning. There were a total of 3 tornados the evening of July 14th, 2004. Terry reported to the office several times prior to and during the tornados which provided excellent information that went right back into the warnings and statements issued by NWS Glasgow.



Terry Willard receives his certificate of appreciation from Tanja Fransen, NWS Glasgow Warning Coordination Meteorologist.

This year we have two spotters who have gone above and beyond a normal report of severe weather to the NWS office. **Eldon Moos**, from the Farmer's Elevator in Circle has been out and about taking photographs of the storms that hit the area on June 6th. During the event he sent photos of what the storms looked like and the meteorologists issuing the warnings were able to see exactly what was occurring. He also sent many, many photos (some real time) of the flooding on Horsecreek near Circle and the damage to the 8 large grain bins in Lindsay.

Gary Kreiman, from 10 miles north of Lindsay is such a weather enthusiast, that he has an automated weather station at his home. The same June 6th storm blew through his area, and he called immediately to let us know about an 80 mph wind gust. He later called to update it to 86 mph, and also report the rainfall total. Gary also called back the next day to provide damage information from the area, and make sure that the staff at NWS Glasgow had all the information they needed.

All of the County DES Coordinators are also weather spotters, and many have been attending the spotter courses for years. Three DES coordinators who have been utilized several times already this year include **Mistica Hisdahl** from McCone County, **Rick Seiler** from Valley County and **John Pisk** from Prairie County. They have spent an incredible amount of time following up after severe weather and documenting the damage in photographs and reports that have been shared with us and the State Disaster and Emergency Services Office. Rick even comes into the NWS office during severe weather to help us contact people and get information on what is occurring. We would love to tell these dedicated people that things will slow down, but we still have a lot of summer left.

As more events unfold and we continue to get the many reports from our amazing spotters, we will add updates to this newsletter.